

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 4

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of George Hamilton IV of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of George Hamilton IV; and

WHEREAS, known as country music's international ambassador, Mr. Hamilton was a country music singer whose artistry spanned more than five decades; and

WHEREAS, a Winston-Salem, North Carolina native, George Hamilton had a love for country music that was rooted in his childhood pastime of listening to Grand Ole Opry stars, including Hank Williams, Hank Snow, Little Jimmy Dickens, and Eddy Arnold; and

WHEREAS, in 1956, Mr. Hamilton's music career launched with his million-selling pop single, "A Rose and a Baby Ruth," which reached number six on the *Billboard* Top 100 and was followed by two successive Top 40 hits; and

WHEREAS, an industry pioneer, George Hamilton is considered the first pop artist to move from the genre of popular music to country music; and

WHEREAS, in 1960, Mr. Hamilton joined the famed Grand Ole Opry and signed a contract, facilitated by Chet Atkins, with RCA Victor records; that same year, he earned his first Top 10 country hit, "Before This Day Ends"; and

WHEREAS, in 1963, George Hamilton released his most successful song, "Abilene," which spent four weeks occupying the number one spot on the charts; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hamilton's 1965 album, *Steel Rail Blues*, written by folk-leaning songwriters Gordon Lightfoot, Phil Ochs, and John Hartford, experienced tremendous success in Canada and made him one of the most popular country music stars in Canada at the time; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, Mr. Hamilton performed at London's International Festival of Country Music, an event which inspired the establishment of the CMA Music Festival, now held annually in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, in 1973, George Hamilton headed a three-month-long, seventy-three-show international tour, and, in 1974, he was the first country artist to play beyond the Iron Curtain in the former countries of Czechoslovakia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR); and

WHEREAS, in addition to his musical endeavors, George Hamilton was an international television star, hosting a Canadian television show for six years and numerous British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) television series; and

WHEREAS, after his final Top 40 hit was released in 1973, Mr. Hamilton remained a vital part of the country music industry. He continued to perform as a touring artist and was a fixture on the Grand Ole Opry stage, where he enjoyed giving backstage tours while recounting stories about the days of Patsy Cline, Roy Acuff, and Ernest Tubb; and

WHEREAS, George Hamilton considered his forty-five-minute impromptu "opening" for Robert F. Kennedy at Vanderbilt University's Memorial Gymnasium a highlight of his career. A guest at the 1968 event, he was approached in the crowd by John Seigenthaler, who requested that Mr. Hamilton entertain the assembly while they waited for the presidential candidate, who was running late; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hamilton was an active and devout Christian who often performed as part of Billy Graham's Christian crusades; and

WHEREAS, George Hamilton was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hamilton enjoyed the loving companionship of Tink, his wife of many years; and

WHEREAS, George Hamilton leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional musician and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of George Hamilton IV, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of George Hamilton IV.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.